

BLACK BEAN SOUP #2 (for 6)

Source: STAFFMEALS AT CHANTERELLE (Chef David Waltuck)

Cook/Prep Time: less than 1 hour

INGREDIENTS:

2 C dried black beans
3 TBS canola (or other vegetable) oil
4 oz bacon, rind discarded, cut into 1/4" dice
1 medium onion, peeled/cut into 1/4" dice
1 large carrot, peeled/cut into 1/4" dice
8 C chicken stock or low-sodium chicken broth or water (+ more as needed)
Coarse salt & freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 tsp Tabasco sauce (or more to taste)
1 tsp white (or red) wine vinegar (preferably sherry vinegar)
6 C cold water
4 bay leaves
3 large garlic cloves, minced
1 TBS dry sherry or Madeira
Garnish: sour cream, diced onion, chopped fresh cilantro, chopped hard-cooked egg

DIRECTIONS:

Pick over beans, discarding stones/debris - rinse well in colander under cold running water - drain - place in large stockpot or bowl - add 6 C water (should cover beans by 2") - soak 8 hours or overnight in refrigerator. Heat oil in large stockpot over medium-low heat - add bacon & sauté, stirring occasionally, till browned (about 15 minutes). Add onion, carrot & garlic - sweat (i.e., slow cooking small amount of fat & water or stock over low heat to soften & release juices, but not brown), uncovered, stirring occasionally (about 10 minutes). Drain soaked beans - add to pot + 8 C stock & bay leaves - bring to boil - reduce heat to medium low & simmer, uncovered, till beans are tender & veggies have practically dissolved (1-1 1/2 hours) - stir occasionally so beans don't stick to pot. If soup gets thick, add more stock or water - most beans should keep their shape, but some will fall apart to thicken soup.

To serve: season with salt, pepper, Tabasco, dry sherry & vinegar - remove bay leaves. Garnish with any/all: sour cream, diced onion, fresh cilantro & chopped hard-cooked egg. [A wonderful version of this soup at the Haubhaus in Haubstadt IN uses onion &/or sherry only - JWF] Serve with salad & cornbread.

[Variations: smoked ham hock - simmer till tender & then dice - instead of bacon / add sweet peppers, leeks or zucchini / add a few hot peppers &/or a few smoked or spicy sausages or even some hot dogs / use half the beans & purée finished soup till smooth]